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UNCLAS COLOMBO 001869

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GADDI
VASQUES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [AMGT](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: REOPENING IN SRI LANKA

1. As you know, a security assessment team visited Sri Lanka a few months ago to investigate whether the Peace Corps could safely reopen its mission here. At the moment, we are awaiting a second inspection of Sri Lanka by members of your staff who can determine the programmatic and administrative priorities should a mission be reestablished. I want to reiterate how important I and our Country Team regard the Peace Corps' returning to Sri Lanka. Although it is too early to predict confidently that a peace agreement will be signed between the government and the LTTE, it appears very likely that a prolonged period of ceasefire is in prospect. Already, eight months have passed without violence. The new government of Sri Lanka has repeatedly asked me to urge an early return by the Peace Corps. The Prime Minister himself has frequently raised the subject with me, and in particular sees a vital role for the Peace Corps in teaching English and perhaps business education.

2. I know you face many pressures to reopen the Peace Corps or expand its operations in various countries. I sincerely hope you will determine soon that the Peace Corps should reopen in Sri Lanka ASAP. The Peace Corps is one of America's noblest endeavors internationally and it certainly has that reputation here from its many years of service to Sri Lanka and the United States.

WILLS